

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 36 are pending in the application and stand rejected. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Claims 1 and 34 stand rejected under Section 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,734,724 issued to Kinoshita in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,764,759 issued to Hamilton, or U.S. Patent No. 5,987,098 issued to Wintour, or U.S. Patent No. 5,987,098 issued to Holland, or U.S. Patent No. 6,580,793 issued to Dunn and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,389,440 issued to Lewis et al. Claim 17 stands rejected under Section 103 as being unpatentable over Kinoshita in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,694,373 to Sastry or Wintour and further in view of Lewis. Claim 26 stands rejected under Section 103 as being unpatentable over Kinoshita in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,558,180 issued to Scordo and further in view of Lewis.

Claim 1 as amended recites, in part, “processing the audio signals according to desired acoustical procedures with the pooled resources, the desired acoustical procedures reducing the feedback signals.”

Claim 17 as amended recites, in part, “a signal processing (SP) module having digital signal processing resources for performing signal processing on the feedback signals of the received audio signals under direction of the CSM to produce processed audio signals, the CSM operable to assign audio signals to the digital signal processing resources.”

Claim 26 as amended recites, in part, “a centralized signal processing (SP) module for performing SP on the audio signals to compensate for the feedback signals received from the plurality of distributed communications terminals responsive to the room models associated with the communications terminals from which the audio signals were received, to produce processed audio signals.”

Claim 34 recites, in part, “responsive to determining that the distributed communications terminal is active, allocating a portion of the central pool of signal processing resources to processing a signal from the communications terminal, the processing compensating for sounds

from the speaker of the communications terminal that are picked up by the microphone of the communications terminal."

Each of Applicants' independent Claims 1, 17, 26 and 34 recite a limitation of pooled or centralized signal processing to reduce, perform signal processing or compensate feedback signals formed by pickup by a microphone of signals from a speaker. The references cited by the Examiner fail to teach, disclose or suggest a centralized pool of signal processing resources allocated to audio feedback signals of distributed communications terminals. The Examiner continues to assert that Kinoshita discloses centralized echo cancellation by relying on the disclosure of Figure 16. Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to column 15, line 15, which states that the embodiment disclosed by Figure 16 requires the use of headsets. No basis exists for the Examiner's rejection of Applicants' claims, which recite centralized processing of feedback signals formed by a microphone picking up the sound of a speaker. Neither Kinoshita nor any of the other references cited by the Examiner teach, disclose or suggest centralized processing of feedback signals. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all of pending Claims 1-36 are allowable and request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections and issue a notice of allowance without further delay.

**CONCLUSION**

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being sent via facsimile on January 3, 2005.

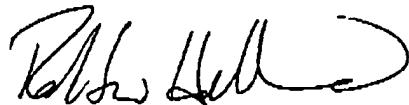


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3 Jan 2005

Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,



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